

Serial No. 10/825,384
Inventor: Michael T. Gauthier

Amendments to the Drawings

Attached to this response are replacement amended drawing sheets including Figures 3 and 6 to make the changes as described in the Office Action by the Examiner.

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Remarks/Arguments

Entry of the foregoing amendments is respectfully requested. Initially, Applicant wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-5, 13, and 15-20. Claims 2, 6, 9-12, and 14-16 have been amended. Claim 1 has been cancelled. Claims 2-20 are currently pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of allowance of the application is respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow.

1. Objections to the Drawing Figures

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings for failing to include certain reference numerals listed in the specification.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's objection to the drawing figures. More specifically, with this response, Applicant submits two amended sheets of drawings including Figures 3 and 6 in which the reference numerals identified as being omitted in the drawing figures by the Examiner have been added. Additionally, Applicant has reversed numerals 90 and 92 in Figure 3 as required by the Examiner. As a result, all of the informalities found in the drawing figures have been addressed and Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the drawing figures.

2. Objections to the Specification

In the Office Action, the Examiner has also objected to the disclosure as including certain informalities pointed out by the Examiner in the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's objection to the specification. More specifically, with this response, Applicant has amended the specification in each of the instances pointed out by the Examiner to remove the informalities located by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the specification.

3. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 6-8 and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

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Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections to claims 6-8 and 15-20. More specifically, with this response, Applicant has amended each of claims 6, 15, and 16 in the manner suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action to remove the indefiniteness from these claims, but not to alter the scope of these claims in any way. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to claims 6-8 and 15-20.

4. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 6-9, 12, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bodnar, U.S. Patent No. 4,597,478 ('478).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections to claims 1, 6-9, 12, and 14 based on the '478 patent. More specifically, with this response, Applicant has canceled claim 1 and amended claim 6 into independent form to include all the limitations found in claim 1, from which claim 6 originally depended, such that the scope of claim 6 has not been altered. Thus, claim 6 requires that the mechanism include a first bearing disposed around the shaft adjacent to the gear and a second bearing disposed around the shaft and spaced from the gear. Additionally, as required by the limitations found in now-canceled claim 1, each bearing must be disposed around the shaft adjacent the gear and have an inner engaging surface engaged with the shaft and an outer engagement surface engaged with the housing.

In contrast, the '478 patent includes a shaft including a rearwardly-extending portion 19 that is disposed within a cylindrical recess 15 formed in the housing 12. The Examiner has indicated that this recess 15 functions as the second bearing required by claim 6. However, there is no indication in the '478 patent that the recess 15 even contacts the rearwardly-extending portion 19 of the shank 16, such that the recess 15 does not function as a second bearing. Further, as recited in claim 6, the bearing must include an inner engaging surface engaged with the shaft and an outer engaging surface engaged with the housing. As the recess 15 is integrally formed in the housing 12, the recess 15 necessarily does not include an outer engaging surface engaged with the housing as required by claim 6. For these reasons, Applicant believes that the subject matter of amended claim 6 is neither shown nor described in the '478 patent such that Applicant believes claim 6, and claims 7 and 8 which depend from claim 6, are allowable.

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Further, with this response, Applicant has amended each of claims 9, 12, and 14 to depend from claim 2, which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to claims 6-9, 12, and 14.

5. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '478 patent.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections to claims 10 and 11 based on the '478 patent. More specifically, claims 10 and 11, with this response, have been amended to depend from claim 2, which as stated previously, Applicant believes to be allowable based on claim 2 being amended to independent form. As a result, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to claims 10 and 11.

6. Allowable Claims 2-5, 13, and 15-20

In the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claims 2-5, 13, and 15-20 would be allowable if rewritten in the manner specified by the Examiner in the Office Action. Thus, with this response, Applicant has amended claim 2 to independent form thereby incorporating all of the subject matter of now cancelled independent claim 1 from which claim 2 depended, such that the scope of claim 2 has not been altered in any way. In addition, Applicant has amended claims 9-14 to depend from claim 2 such that these claims are also believed to be allowable. Further, as stated previously, claim 15 has been amended to remove the indefiniteness from the claim, but without altering the scope of claim 15 in any way, to obtain the allowance of claim 15, as pointed out by the Examiner in the Office Action. Thus, Applicant believes that claim 15, and claims 16-20 the depend from claim 15, are allowable.

Conclusion

It is submitted that claims 2-20 are in compliance with 35 U.S.C. §§112, 102, and 103, and each defines patentable subject matter. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

No fees are believed to be payable with this response. Nevertheless, the Director is authorized to charge any fees, or credit any overpayments to deposit account no. 50-1170.

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The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to help expedite the prosecution allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: 9/22/05

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